

The Nine Convicts

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During the young Ireland revolution of 1848, nine young Irishmen were captured, tried and convicted of treason against the Queen. The sentence was death. The presiding judge read out the names of the condemned men: Charles Duffy, Thomas Meagher, Patrick Donahue, Terence McManus, Richard O'Gorman, Morris Lyene, Michael Ireland, Thomas McGee, John Mitchell. Have you anything to say before the court passes sentence?

Thomas Meagher had been chosen to speak for them all. My Lord this is our first offence, but not our last, if you will be easy with us this once, we promise on our word as gentlemen to try to do better the next time, and the next time sure we won't be fools enough to get caught. The indignant judge sentenced them to be hanged by the neck, but passionate protests from all over the world forced Queen Victoria to commute the sentence, the men were transported for life to the penal colony of the then savage Australis.

In 1871 a Sir Charles Duffy was elected prime minister of the Australian state of Victoria. To her amazement Queen Victoria learned from her prime minister Disraeli that this was the same Charles Duffy who had been transported for treason 23 years before. She demanded the records of the other eight convicts and this is what she learned.

Thomas Meagher was Governor of Montana, Patrick Donahue and Terence McManus were Brigadier Generals in the U.S. Army. Richard O'Gorman was Governor General of New Foundland. Morris Lyene was Attorney General of Australia to which office Michael Ireland succeeded. Thomas McGee was president of the Dominion of Canada and John Mitchell was a prominent New York politician whose son later became Mayor of New York City.

This amazing true story of nine men banished from their native land to a penal colony for their political views, and in later years becoming outstanding citizens in America, Australia, and Canada, is now a part of the United States Congressional Record in Washington, D.C.